

REMARKS

The Examiner objected to the specification due to several sentences, which the Examiner considered to be unclear. First, the Examiner stated that it was unclear as to what structure was being referred to by the recitation “the coupling” in line 20 of page six. The last sentence on line 20 states “the coupling may be secured by a locking nut 54 or any other suitable means.” This coupling is the same coupling referred to in the paragraph above (line 4) that states “figure 2 depicts a typical trailing arm front suspension for a snowmobile and the coupling of a ski thereto. Therefore, the sentence merely states that the coupling of the front suspension to the ski may be secured with a locking nut or any other suitable means.

Second, the Examiner believed that the recitation of “a aperture” on line 8 of page 7 is grammatically incorrect. The recitation of “a aperture” on line 8 of page seven has been amended to recite “an aperture”.

Third, the Examiner states the recitation on lines 9-11 of page eight stating “the spindle 56 is secured to the bridge 44 by inserting the bushing 66 through the aperture 64 of the mounting collar 62 and positioning the mounting collar 62, with the bushing 66 inserted through the aperture 64, between the side portions 46” is considered unclear as to how the bushing is inserted into the aperture of the mounting collar and also between the side portions 46 of the bridge 44. From the specification it is clear that the spindle 56 is secured to the bridge 44 by inserting the bushing 66 through the aperture 64 of the mounting collar 62. The mounting collar 62 is then positioned, *with the bushing 66 inserted through the aperture* between the *side portions 46*. Then the coupling between the mounting collar 62 and the ski 18 is secured in place by inserting a bolt 86 through the hollow interior 82 of the bushing 66 and securing the coupling, for example, with a locking bolt 88. In light of the remarks and amendments above it is believed the Examiner’s objections are overcome and should be withdrawn.

Figure 2 was objected to for having reference numbers that did not appear in the disclosure. Figure 2 has been amended to remove the reference numbers not identified in the disclosure and to remove the short lead line pointing towards a rectangular shaped object on the far left hand side of Figure 2.

Figure 4 has been amended to more clearly show the central point 77 between the first end 70 and second end 72 of the bushing 66. No new matter has been added to the application, as this information was already contained implicitly and explicitly within the specification and figures.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings stating that not every feature of the invention specified in the claims is shown within the drawings. The Examiner gives an example of claim 1 reciting “a bushing for coupling the ski to the spindle, the bushing having a flange for offsetting the spindle to an edge of the ski”. However, reference numbers within the figures call out each one of the elements of claim 1, including the bushing, the ski, the spindle, the flange, and the edges of the ski. Support for this can be found in Figures 3-5, a similar argument can be made with respect to claims 6, 11, and 14, therefore, the objection to claims 1, 6, 11, and 14 have been addressed and therefore should be withdrawn.

The specification has been amended to add reference number 77 for a central point between the first end 70 and the second end 72 of the bushing 66 within the final paragraph on page seven. Reference number 77 was also amended in Figure 4 to clearly call out the central point claim element. No new matter has been added to the application, as this information was already contained implicitly and explicitly within the specification.

Claims 14-19 were objected to due to typographical errors. Claim 14 has been amended to insert the word “the” in front of the word snowmobile in line two of claim 14. Furthermore, a space has been inserted between the word about and the number 2.0 in the first line of claim 15. These amendments overcome the Examiner’s objections and therefore withdrawal of the objection is requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-19 under §112 as containing subject matter that was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time that the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Specifically, the Examiner states that it is unclear how the bushing is inserted into the aperture of the mounting collar and also between the side portions 46 of the bridge 44 to enable the offsetting of an edge of a ski to the spindle. Support for the claim recitations can be found in the specification with particular reference to the first full paragraph of page eight and to Figures 4, 5, 6A and 6B. As stated in the paragraph, the spindle 56 is secured to the bridge 44 by inserting the first section 74 of bushing 66 through the aperture 64 of the mounting collar 62.

The mounting collar 62 is then positioned *with the bushing 66 inserted through the aperture 64* between the side portions 46. The coupling between the mounting collar 62 and the ski 18 is secured in place by inserting a bolt 86 through the hollow interior 82 of the bushing 66 and securing the coupling, for example, with a locking bolt 88. When this paragraph is read with reference to Figures 4-6B it is clear how the bushing is inserted within the aperture of the mounting collar and also between the side portions of the bridge to enable the offsetting of an edge of the ski to the spindle.

Claims 1-3, 6, and 10 were rejected as anticipated by Piedboeuf (U.S. Patent No. 3,693,992). Independent claim 1 as amended recites “a bushing for coupling the ski to the spindle, the bushing having a flange wherein the flange offsets the spindle from a center of the ski so that the spindle is closer to an edge of the ski”. By contrast, the snowmobile ski leg disclosed by Piedboeuf does not have a bushing with a flange that offsets the spindle from a center of the ski so that the spindle is closer to an edge of the ski. The bushing of Piedboeuf is provided to prevent any metal-to-metal contact between the strut member 10 and the support member 34. It has nothing to do with offsetting the spindle with respect to the center of the ski. Claim 1, as amended, is therefore believed to be patentably distinguishable from Piedboeuf.

Claims 2 and 3 depend from base claim 1. For at least the same reasons given with respect to claim 1, claims 2 and 3 are patentably distinguishable over Piedboeuf. Similar arguments can be made for claims 6 and 10. Therefore claims 6 and 10 are considered patentably distinguishable over Piedboeuf.

Claims 1-4, 6-8, and 10 were rejected under §103 as unpatentable over Metheny (U.S. Patent No. 5,145,201) in view of Chaumont (U.S. Patent No. 3,613,809). The Examiner states it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time that the invention was made to utilize a spindle to couple a snowmobile to the ski of Metheny, as taught by Chaumont.

The structure that would result from the Examiner’s proposed combination does not meet the terms of amended claim 1. Claim 1, as amended, recites “a bushing for coupling the ski to the spindle, the bushing having a flange wherein the flange offsets the spindle from a center of the ski so that the spindle is closer to an edge of the ski”. By contrast, Metheny’s vehicular snow ski discloses flanges located on the outer edge of the bushing and not offset from the center. Therefore, the combination that would result if the teachings of the two references were combined would still lack a bushing including a flange wherein the flange offsets the spindle

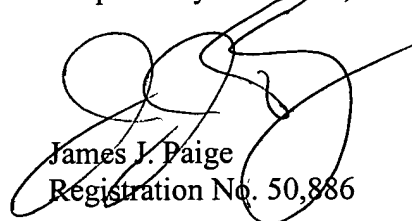
from a center of the ski so that the spindle is closer to an edge of the ski as required by amended claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 as amended is patentably distinct from the combination of Metheny and Chaumont.

Claims 2-4 are dependent upon allowable base claim 1, therefore claims 2-4 are patentably distinct from the combination of Metheny and Chaumont. A similar argument can be made for claims 6-8 and 10. Therefore, claims 6-8 and 10 are patentably distinguishable from the combination of Metheny and Chaumont.

In light of the above, applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-19 are in condition for allowance. As these are the only claims pending in the application, issuance of a Notice of Allowance is courteously solicited.

The application presents four independent claims and twenty total claims. Please treat any communication filed at any time in this application, requiring a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) towards timely submission as incorporating a proper petition for an extension of the appropriate length of time. If any additional fees are required to enter the present amendment, applicant hereby authorizes the office to charge our Deposit Account No. 061910. If the Examiner feels prosecution of the present application can be materially advanced by telephonic interview the undersigned would welcome a call at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



James I. Paige
Registration No. 50,886

Customer No. 22859
Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.
200 South Sixth Street
Suite 4000
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1425
Telephone: (612) 492-7222
Facsimile: (612) 492-7077

Please grant any extension of time necessary for entry; charge any fee due to Deposit Account No. 06-1910.

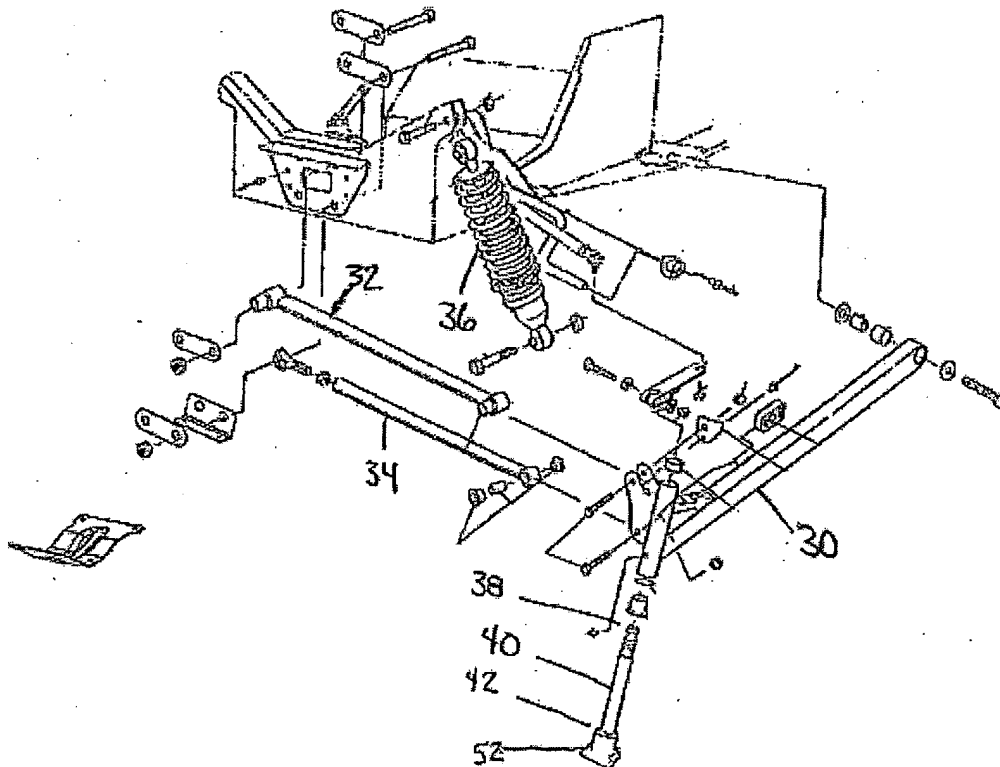
#3066372\1

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Enclosed are replacement Figures 2 and 4, which will replace all prior versions of the figures in the application.

Attachment: Replacement sheet

Annotated sheet showing changes



Note:
Deletion

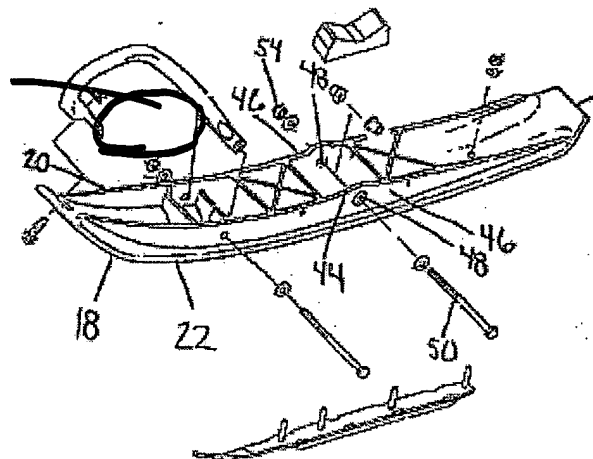


Fig. 2
Prior Art

FIGURE 4